

ing every step in the ashes and loose cinders, we at last caught the smell of sulphur and the sight of fire. Melted lava was slowly oozing at two or three spots outside, below the brim of the crater, and we went and stood beside one of these burning streams, while one of the men present thrust a stick into the fiery, viscid mass, and brought out a portion of lava, which, like a piece of dough, he moulded with the stick for me round a copper coin. The volcano had been unusually active for some days. One of my fellow-travellers, in trying to protect a lady, had just burned and spoiled a good coat, and a piece of burning rock had hit and severely injured his hand. Every few moments an explosion rent the air. The sulphurous stench nearly stifled us, and the ground was reeking hot beneath our feet. I greatly desired to see the crater, and tried urgently to get the guide to pilot me. After coming all the way from Rome to look into the throat of the fiery monster, it was hard to be disappointed. But this ordinary feat had become highly dangerous. After demurring awhile, he grasped my hand, and seizing a more calm moment, rushed with me for a few dizzy seconds to a spot overlooking the burning abyss. The fearful, convulsive explosions, shaking the ground beneath us—the hissing of melted rocks hurled high in air—and the boiling fiery gulf below, contrasting with the darkness of night, and the murky cloud above, will never be forgotten. Presently there was a heaving in the direction in which we stood, and the guide took to his heels, dragging me after him, and we managed to dodge the shower of hot grape that fell around.

Returning down the mountain by torch-light to Resina. I overtook my suffering friend, who had met with no further accident except the falling of his horse —*Dr. Corson's Loiterings in Europe*

ASCENT OF VESUVIUS.

Presently it grew dark, and we looked forward in the dim distance, and saw a dark mass peering toward the clouds, crowned with a fiery brightness mingled with smoke, and there burst forth the exclamation, "Mount Vesuvius!" I could not keep my eyes from that mountain light-house, and little heeded the bustle of one of the noisiest cities of Europe, as we entered the streets of Naples. Sleep in a quiet quarter came with a double relish, and the next morning the first thought was of the volcano. In my eagerness I could scarcely then appreciate the beauty around me. By what I confess seems now a morbid and unreasonable caprice, the battle-field of Waterloo and Mount Vesuvius interested me more in anticipation than any other scenes in Europe.

Having secured the services of a guide, with a torch and other equipments, I made my arrangements to remain after dark at the top. It was a beautiful afternoon as we slowly ascended from Resina, winding amid the most luxuriant vineyards, and mounting, one after the other, mounds and hardened rivers of lava, the deposits of the various eruptions of a thousand years. We passed the guard stationed near the spot where the guide said a party of English, with their wives, had been murdered by robbers, a few years since, and near the summit saw the sun in strange beauty set upon the bosom of the Mediterranean. Panting up the highest and steepest ascent, all bare and black, without anything to lay hold upon, and with our feet sink-